

## **Analysing Otherness in Multicultural Teacher Education: What Can(not) be Done?**

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**Abstract:** This article explores three different ways of analysing otherness in multicultural teacher education, using one Finnish student teacher's narrative as an illustration: A biographical approach to otherness and identity, interactional and sociolinguistic perspectives as well as dialogism. These interdisciplinary methods have not been used systematically and coherently in research on multicultural teacher education. Reviewing their pros and cons, the authors argue that they can allow both researchers and practitioners to reflect on otherness and diversity in education, especially in their more complex understandings. The article represents a first collective attempt at answering the question what can(not) be done in researching Otherness in this context.

### **Introduction**

“Each person is the other to the others”

(Laing, 1967: 68)

Otherness has always been a central issue in education. Since the birth of Modernity in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and that of *national* educational systems, the treatment of the Other has changed in the field (Maffesoli, 1997). Its goal was at first to make sure that all the pupils and students learnt how to be a good “national citizen”, to practice the same standard language and to share the same “culture”. “National” then became a keyword to create Nation-States or “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1993). The different Other had thus no place in such a system of education unless s/he was able to become like the others (Abdallah-Preteille, 1986). With the emergence of postmodernity after the second world war, the horrors of “over-nationalism” e.g. during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War (Bauman, 2004), and mass immigration, education, though still very much “national”, has experienced many

changes. Amongst others: academic mobility and migration have intensified (Byram & Dervin, 2008), classrooms have diversified in most countries and supranational discourses such as those of the EU or the UNESCO have urged governments to respect people from other countries and to promote their inclusion (Banks, 2008; Palaiologou & Dietz, 2012). Intercultural, multicultural and/or global education, in their own ways, have all attempted to normalize the presence of the (foreign) Other in education (Abdallah-Preteuille, 1999; Grant & Portera, 2010; Dervin, 2012). Today the Other is increasingly viewed, thanks to ‘American’ multicultural education amongst others, beyond exclusive references to migrants to include many and varied forms of Othernesses such as sexual minorities, representative of different worldviews, of varied regional identities, etc. (Banks, 2008). In other words, Otherness is now also considered from *within* rather than exclusively from the *outside* (Baudrillard & Guillaume, 1997: 21). In this article, we suggest that otherness should also be examined from within, rather than only in relation to foreigners and migrants in multicultural teacher education. We are interested in how to analyse what we propose to call *figures of Otherness* (Baudrillard & Guillaume, 1995) in this specific context.

This article is exploratory in nature and derives from a need for the three authors to reflect on research methodology when dealing with the ‘multicultural’ in teacher education. Though we share very similar ideas on how to conceptualise Otherness in education (Dervin, 2012; Talib et al., 2009) methodologically we feel that we need to explore various analytical approaches so that we can examine data from diverse perspectives in teacher education. Working on a narrative written by a Finnish student teacher, we propose a template which can be used to analyse how he expresses, constructs and enacts his Otherness. The narrative was written during a course given by one of the authors on multicultural education and deals with the self as a religious other. In the course called “Teachers’ intercultural knowledge” the students were asked to describe a significant experience when they had felt themselves as outsiders - “the Other”. They were also asked to reflect on their

understanding of the experience in the narratives and afterwards in conversations with other students.

In order to create a template for analyzing Otherness and answer the question “what can(not) be done?”, we are considering the combination of three complementary approaches from different fields: narrative and identity analysis (section 1), a sociocultural approach (section 2) and dialogism (section 3). These three methods have not been used systematically in research on teacher education and on the theme of Otherness. Though we are not trying to demonstrate the importance of integrating reflection on Otherness in teacher education, we argue that by promoting it student teachers could be more ready to work with and consider pupils as diverse diversities (Dervin, 2011), without establishing a hierarchy between canonical Otherness (e.g. migrants) and the other pupils. Our approach to Otherness is socio-constructivist and we maintain that Otherness is a discursive process of construction between at least two individuals – and that it is by no means a given (see Piller, 2011). We thus look at how Otherness is ‘done’ in the set task, rather than what they are.

### **1. Narratives of Otherness: a few words about the data**

The goal of the narrative task was to make students reflect and ponder over their experiences of otherness within themselves, with the underlying assumption that such reflexivity allows for more intercultural awareness (Abdallah-Preteuille, 2011). The students were asked to answer the following questions: Where and when did the incident or experience happen? Why did it happen? And what was actually happening? The following times and places were mentioned in the instructions: living abroad, a special occasion (e.g. a funeral), being an immigrant in Finland, moving to another place, travelling abroad, coming to know an immigrant, studying in a school

where other languages were used as dominant languages, everyday life (e.g. sexual minorities and religious minorities), and school contexts.

In total we collected 54 narratives. When we met to decide on which narrative to retain for this article, we went through all the narratives and started categorizing them (stories of migration; stories of religious belonging; stories of social class, etc.). We chose this narrative for several reasons: 1. It is a story about a male student's experience of otherness (most of the other narratives had been written by women), 2. The narrative deals with his religious background (and not e.g. migration), 3. The narrative presents an experience of Otherness which appeared to be very strong and life-changing.

The student's narrative is divided into 6 sections (see appendix 1 for a translation of the original narrative from Finnish). It follows this thematic structure:

1. The student explains that he comes from a Lestadian family (a conservative Lutheran revival movement in Finland) and that, as a consequence, he was aware as a child of the differences between home and the outside world,
2. After his parents' divorce, his family became ostracized in the Lestadian community (divorce was frowned upon and not allowed in the community). He did not know where he belonged,
3. The student wanted to travel. He moved to Spain after his A Levels,
4. He understood then that people were very similar in the world. He came to realize that religion did not restrain him any more,
5. He rejected his religion and moved back to Finland,
6. He believes in harmony between people and cultures.

In what follows, we are examining some aspects of the student's narrative while reflecting on how to analyse otherness in relation to three complementary and interdisciplinary approaches.

## **2. Narrative, otherness and identity**

The concept of identity is one of the key - yet contested - concepts of our times. It has been theorized from many different disciplinary angles in the humanities and the social sciences. Identity covers a wide range of sociocultural parameters such as gender, age, generation, class, profession, nationality, ethnicity, race, language, religion, and place/space (Ewing, 1990; Ehrenberg, 2000; Bauman, 2004; Brubaker, 2006). The intersection of these identity markers in expressing, constructing and negotiating the self and the other is also increasingly taken into account in research (e.g. Anthias, 2011; Gallardo & McNeill, 2009). Identity plays a central role in analysing Otherness as it is through the 'confrontation' with an Other that identity emerges.

In this section we look at how identity (and thus otherness) is 'done' in the student teacher's narrative. We are well aware that we face certain problems when defining identity as the concept is very polysemic (Bauman, 2004) and that we need to position our understanding of it. We focus on identity as something that emerges through social interaction. As sociologists Berger and Luckmann (1966) argued already some 45 years ago, the social world is built by human interaction and action, and individuals constitute the social reality in a dialectical process. This means that the process of identity construction is closely connected to communicative processes and interaction and that language has an important role in this construction.

In the following sections we look at the biographical and interactional approaches that can be used in studying identity and otherness in the student's narrative.

### **2.1. A biographical approach to identity: the “storied self”**

The “storied self” as a biographical view of identity has become a dominant paradigm in research. In researching identities the most common form of identity narrative is life stories. The underlying assumption of this view is that narratives can represent a person's identity fully. The stories are treated more or less as authentic and truthful to the reality when defining one's self and identity, i.e., the storytellers make sense of themselves in time and place when they are telling and defining experiences that happened to them. This is why identities are often referred to as “narrative identities” in biographical approaches (De Fina & Georgakopolou, 2012) because the narrative gives the researcher an idea of how a person constructs a sense of self.

McAdams' “Identity is a life story” (1993: 5) reflects the idea that as an adult, an individual makes his life story over and over again and in the end of this process unity, coherence and a stable and continuous sense of self across time and space can emerge (see Bruner 1994: 5). This idea of an ideally coherent life story has been criticized because it privileges certain kinds of identities. In the stories the tellers construct their life stories through different kinds of processes representing unified and mostly positive selves (e.g. Brockmeier and Carbaugh, 2001). In research, a lack of coherence in life stories has often been interpreted as evidence of an unsuccessful and sometimes meaningless life (Roberts, 2004). We feel that this is problematic when analysing Otherness in teacher education.

When defining one's self in life stories, one of the most typical ways of doing it is *positioning* (Davies & Harré, 1990) where tellers make sense of themselves, the events or experiences that happened to them. In positioning the construction of self is taking place in an interactional process,

where every positioning act is always at least two-way, because positioning the self requires positing the other (Harré & van Langenhove, 1991: 398). Georgakopolou (2005) adds that the focus of positioning should not thus only be the self but also the other. There have been moves to redefine positioning towards a more interactional model and the focus should be, according to sociolinguistics (see below), on studying more closely the interaction processes. The assumption here is that speakers actively and also agentively select, resist and revisit positions (de Fina & Georgakopolou, 2012: 163).

Bamberg's (1997) model of three interrelated levels is an interactionally sensitive approach to narrative identity where the teller is "doing" self. Bamberg's model allows pinpointing the action of the participants in a conversation and his focus is on how the people use stories to make sense of who they are (De Fina & Georgakopolou, 2012):

*The first level* examines the narrator and her/his relation to other characters in the story. This level also involves the representation of characters and the ways in which these relate to social categories and their potential action. In our narrative the student teacher explains: "I was born in a Lestadian family with eight children" (large amount of children is typical in Lestadian families). By giving away this piece of information he seems to be either explaining to his potential readers one typical characteristic of Lestadian families or simply convincing the reader of the authenticity of his claim.

*The second level* looks at positioning as an interactional process, where the teller picks up aspects of self that s/he presents as relevant vis-à-vis the interlocutors in local contexts of storytelling. The student in our narrative writes: "At school and in the playground I was an odd bird. At home we were taught how to act and the other children were taught different things". It is then through these other characters that the student is able to define his difference, his identity and otherness.

*The third level* represents an attempt to define the teller's self and to find a solution to the question "Who am I? In the narrative the student first states "I didn't know where I belonged", which is understandable in the context of the story as his family had split (something that is badly regarded in Lestadian circles). He did not know who he was, because of his confusing life situation: his mother was a Lestadian who remained in the community while his father who wasn't a Lestadian left the community – which triggered a difficult position. At the end of his narrative he seems to have come to terms with his self and accept a certain form of identity which seems to reside in similarities between him and people from other places, other "cultures". The fact that he has 'abandoned' his religion is also an important characteristic of his identity in the *hic et nunc* of the time of writing his narrative.

Positioning the self and the other is both subconscious and conscious. In the narrative under scrutiny, the student teacher is often positioning himself as an outsider, especially at the beginning of his narrative, for example by saying that "I was a Finn, but I was looking at the culture from the side and didn't take part in it". The main reader of his narrative, his lecturer, one of us, was Finnish herself and his word choice is interesting as he places his identity at a supranational level. It is important to note at this stage that this might have been caused by the fact that the course he was taking dealt with multicultural education and that migration, mobility and internationality were talked about. By presenting this national identity he probably means that being a Lestadian Finn was something very different from the other Finnish children and that he found it hard to identify with them even though he also was a Finn.

## **2.2 Interactional approaches to identity**

Recent interactional approaches to identities (e.g. De Fina, 2003; Georgakopolou, 2007), which have also become increasingly mainstream within e.g. the field of sociolinguistics, are interested in

more contextually situated practice and differ therefore from earlier studies, where identity was seen as more stable. While the storied self approach presented in the previous section looked at identity from a macro-perspective, interactional approaches examine identity and otherness from a micro-level. These approaches stress the dynamic form of identities and the fact that identities can be multiple, fleeting and not stable. The focus in these approaches is not on who the people are or who the people are perceived to be, but on what or who they ‘do being’ in specific environments of language use for specific purposes. Identities are thus taken to be constructed in talk (Androutsopoulos & Georgakopolou, 2003).

Narratives are often used to bring up the positive images and identities of the tellers and to present others in the story world. By negotiating the relationship between oneself and others, “the teller is able to portray her/himself as people who think and act in specific ways without directly talking who they are” (de Fina & Georgakopolou, 2012: 167). In our narrative the student teacher claims: “I read a lot of books and was dreaming about far away countries where living was free and adventures waiting”. This utterance could be interpreted in many ways – one way is to think that the student as a child wanted to live another kind of life than his life in a religious family and community.

Another way of examining *self-presentation* in narrative is presented in Schriffin’s (1996) study where she showed that storytellers negotiate and construct different aspects of their selves. Tellers can present different sides of themselves depending whether they report actions, feelings or beliefs. According to Bruner (1990: 194) the way of presenting ourselves is epistemical if we state our feelings or beliefs, while agentic aspects of self are revealed when we report actions that have effects on others for example. Schriffin (1996) also found that epistemic selves are often constructed explicitly, while agentic selves are constructed through the actions of the teller in the story world. For example in our story, the agentic self is revealed when the student keeps telling about his desires and actions, and at last his success to break out of the religious community and the

whole Lestadian movement. At the same time he is, however, pondering over his rights to do this move by comparing the two worlds, the religious world around him and the outside world.

Besides self-presentation identities can be identified through *social identity categories*. The point is that group membership is essential to an individual's self-concept and a sense of identity and the study of how they are used and negotiated in discourse become important. Sometimes the social identity category or membership of the group is directly presented or clear in narratives. In our narrative the teller says that "I did not know where to belong to, because my father was not religious and my mother was". This may be caused by confusion and by the fact that the student didn't have any clear social group to identify with as a child and youngster (de Fina & Georgakopolou, 2012).

Sometimes social identity can also be expressed indirectly, through symbolic processes e.g. sounds, expression of a language and words. These can be seen in connection with the social groups and categories which are representing the teller. For example styles of speaking can be associated to certain social groups and roles. This makes it possible for the teller to switch codes in the narrative and thus include many different identity forms in the same narrative (de Fina & Georgakopolou, 2012). When these kinds of extra-linguistic categories are combined with the utterances, they are called *indexicality*. We did not find this kind of example in our narrative because it is written – not e.g. an interview. With other types of data such elements would most probably help us to analyse identity and otherness.

A very interesting approach or point of view in identity studies is to pay attention to how locally constructed identities are bounded in larger constructs. This signals that tellers can give situated meanings to categories like race, gender and ethnicity and distance themselves from the groups that are associated with them. One example of how the teller is distancing himself from the group he is associated with, occurs when the student claims that "I was a Finn but looked at the (traditional)

Finnish culture from side-line and did not participate in it". We suppose that one interpretation to this could be that habits in his family differed a lot from the mainstream Finnish families because of the strict religious norms.

In this section on narrative, otherness and identity, we have explored two ways of looking into narratives of otherness. Bamberg's 1997 approach to narrative allows for a macro- and thematic analysis of data while interactional approaches allow for more detailed, "micro-" discussions of a narrative. In the following section we discuss an approach which is derived from sociolinguistics. This approach is in line with the narrative approaches that we have presented.

### **3. A sociocultural linguistic approach to Otherness**

The framework for the analysis of identity as a construction in linguistic interaction is discussed further in this section. Two influential sociolinguists are called upon: Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall. The two scholars (2005: 586) also define identity as the social positioning of self and other. The framework they use to analyse identity draws from interdisciplinary fields concerned with the intersection of language, culture and society. Sociocultural linguistics, according to Bucholtz and Hall, encompasses the disciplinary subfields of sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology (e.g. Ochs, 1992; Silverstein, 1976), socially orientated forms of discourse analysis, and linguistically orientated social psychology.

Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 587) propose five principals for analysing identity as produced in linguistic interaction, which we find compelling for analysing the Finnish student's narrative.

The first element, called *emergence principal*, states that identity is the product rather than the source of linguistic and other semiotic practices, and that therefore identity is social and cultural rather than a mere internal psychological phenomenon. The traditional view of identity places it

primarily in an individual mind and the use of language is limited to reflect and express one's internal mental state. However, this view may discount the social ground on which identity is built, maintained and altered (Ibid. 587). Bucholz and Hall strongly argue that identities are actively challenged (traditional social categories such as African American, or Lestadian in the student's narrative) and are continuously re-created.

As mentioned earlier identity cannot be viewed as a psychological mechanism of self-classification that is expressed in social behaviours but rather as something that is constituted through social action, and especially through language (ibid.: 2005). The written "narrative" interaction under scrutiny takes place between the narrator and the reader or the male student teacher and his lecturer. In this excerpt the male student teacher defines himself as the Other:

At school and in the playground I was an "odd bird" (the strange one).

I was a Finn but looked at the (traditional) culture from side-line and did not participate in it.

It was very hard for a small boy.

Sometimes I placed myself above everybody and sometimes I felt lesser than others.

The expression "odd bird" that the student uses does not necessarily refer to his own expression but most probably a definition used by others, perhaps the children at school, his family members, and other members of Lestadian community (see dialogism in the following section). In earlier interactions even in his childhood he may have been defined as the Other, the one who does not properly fit into the religious social group, especially after his parents' divorce. The Lestadian religious culture or that of the student's is produced, according to Mannheim and Tedlock (1995), in the process of writing. The speaker is drawing on multiple voices and texts in each utterance.

Otherness is present within the self as well as attached to particular bodies that get labelled and marked as the Other (Todd, 2003). It may also be a question of strengthening and defining one's identity. Being the Other starts as soon as one becomes conscious of one's own dissimilarity or as one does not fit into the expected framework (Abdallah-Preteille, 2006: 478).

The second element proposed by Bucholtz and Hall, *positionality principal*, challenges the idea that identity is a collection of broad social categories. Bucholtz and Hall's perspective broadens the traditional referential range of identity to encompass (a) macro-level demographic categories; (b) local ethnographically specific cultural positions; and (c) temporary and interactionally specific stances and roles (ibid. 592). In order to understand how identities work one must consider multiple dimensions, which might simultaneously occur in a single interaction and demonstrate very different kinds of positions (ibid. 594). During the written narrative interaction the student teacher is positioning himself above everybody and sometimes as being inferior than other people (he writes: "Sometimes I placed myself above everybody and sometimes I felt lesser than the others").

The third point, *indexicality principal*, is concerned with the mechanism of how identity is constituted. Indexical linguistic forms are used to construct identity positions. According to Silverstein (1976) and Ochs (1992) the concept of indexicality involves the creation of semiotic links between linguistic forms and social meanings. In identity formation this means associations between language and identity are embedded in cultural beliefs and values (ideologies). This, in turn, determines who can (could) or should speak in a certain way. The student explains that "at we were taught how to behave and other children were taught different things".

Social categories and labels either negative or positive are not fixed categories but intersubjectively negotiated, and even in fleeting interaction speakers position themselves and others as particular kinds of persons (ibid: 595) Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 598) stress that by considering identity formation at multiple indexical levels (e.g. labelling, positioning, etc.), we can assemble "much

richer portrait of subjectivity”. As such throughout his narrative, the student shows several facets of his identification, i.e., he changed his perception of himself (from the “odd bird” to being similar to others after his stay abroad).

The earlier mentioned expression the “odd bird” is a label resulting from the student teacher’s childhood position. Later in the narrative he mentions that “in that situation a small boy’s mind was confused”. In this utterance the narrative viewpoint is modified through a passive voice. He is looking at himself from a different vintage point.

The forth *principal* emphasizes identity as *relational*, never autonomous or independent, and it acquires its social meaning in relation to other social actors, and thus is defined through several, often overlapping complementary relations (ibid. 598). Defining identity through sameness, understanding people different from us requires that we work on ourselves in order to avoid lapsing into a projection, a game of mirrors, or into a reproduction of what already exists (Abdallah-Preteille, 2006; Kristeva, 1991). One way to learn about diversity is to understand otherness as part of one’s own identity (Kristeva, 1991). When we accept all that is imperfect, improper and vulnerable in our solid self, we learn to accept others. Teachers with significant experiences of otherness could be more sensitive to diversity in their work. When teachers have an experience of being the uncomfortable “other” themselves, they may not allow that feeling to permeate in their class (Roose, 2001).

The fifth and final principal *partialness* by Bucholtz and Hall (ibid.: 605) draws from cultural anthropology and feminist theory. It challenges the master narratives of previous generations and accepts the postmodern concept of fractured and discontinuous identities (Bauman, 2000). According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005) the partialness of identity construction can be deliberate and intentional or sometimes less conscious. It can be created in interactional negotiations but could as well be an outcome from others’ perceptions or larger ideological processes and material structures

such as cultural categories or social positions. The principal problematizes the autonomy of an agent who is in charge of his identity. They refer to Duranti's (2004) sociolinguistic view that the very use of language is an act of agency. In that respect identity is a kind of social action that agency can accomplish (ibid.: 606).

This account of identity and interaction clearly show that identity does not reside within an individual but instead the relations of sameness and difference, realness or pretentiousness, power and disempowerment are intersubjectively created (ibid.: 608).

### **3. From methodological individualism to dialogism**

#### **3.1. Multivoicedness in researching Otherness**

This section looks at how certain tools from linguistic discourse analysis, especially dialogism (Linell, 2010), can help us to study Otherness in the student's narrative. This approach is complementary to the previous approaches by allowing us to go a bit deeper into people's discourses.

Dialogism is inspired by the work of the Russian literary scholar Michael Bakhtin (Grossen, 2010). Bakhtin (1997) argued that behind every word, every sentence that people utter, there is the voice of an other, a previous discourse, with which s/he discusses. This means that an individual's discourse is never individual as a text (in its general meaning) but that it is always written or spoken for and with somebody (*multivoicedness*, Hermans, 2004). For Gallagher (2011: 488): "We are immersed in interactive relations with others before we know it". This is why he suggests that we put an end to "methodological individualism" (ibid.) which does not take into account the complexity of the construction of Otherness with others. For the narrative under scrutiny this means that when the student was writing it, he had in mind an audience: on the one hand, the people who would read his

text (e.g., the lecturer) but also the people with whom he had experienced some of the things he describes. The researcher cannot thus always “guess” who these actors are and thus not analyse the text in its full complexity, as some of these voices can be identified while others cannot. Identifiable voices seem to be those of the parents in the text (“at home we were taught to...”) while many voices cannot be pinpointed (“in Europe I wanted to be one of them”) (Marnette, 2005). He also mentions a “buddy”, with whom he moved to Spain, but we know nothing about him/her (in the Finnish language, as there is no gender it is impossible to know if the “buddy” was male or female).

Furthermore as an Other him/herself, and a voice with whom the student had dialogued, the researcher needs to bear in mind that by setting the narrative task, s/he has contributed to the narrative. R. D. Laing (1961: 82) argued that “No one acts or experiences in a vacuum” and that the presence of the researcher in the set task cannot but influence the ‘doing’ of Otherness. Only one of us knows what was taught in the accompanying course, the specific discourses that were shared by and with the students, the scientific references that were worked upon, etc. Without all these elements, it is difficult for the authors to know what of what the student is writing is influenced by these discourses, which thus leads us to “monologize” his narrative – i.e. put aside many of the important voices that helped him to build his text and his Otherness (Grossen, 2010: 18) or discard much of the multivoicedness.

### **3.2. Doing discourse analysis is doing analysis (Antaki et al., 2002)**

In order to deal with multivoicedness, many other potential drawbacks of trying to analyse the student’s ‘doing’ of Otherness can be addressed through a classic text of discourse analysis, written by Antaki, Billig, Edwards & Potter (2002). In the article, the authors review what they call six drawbacks in doing discourse analysis. We feel that these elements are important when researching

otherness in teacher education through dialogism. In what follows, we review the drawbacks and illustrate them with the student's narrative.

In order to address the complexity of doing Otherness, it is first important to avoid *under-analysis through summary*. For Antaki et al. (2002) this means that simply summarizing the gist or points made by the student (as we did when we presented the macro-structure of the narrative in the 1<sup>st</sup> section) would not treat fairly the co-construction game which is taking place in the narrative. As such it is difficult to summarize what the student is writing about without having a feeling that we are treating him unfairly. There are indeed many aspects of his narrative which remain "unexplainable" to us and we can only hypothesize why he used such or such word or phrase or why he structured his narrative as such. This was the case when we discussed amongst ourselves the very beginning of his narrative and the way he was presenting himself: "I was born in a Lestadian family in Oulu (Northern Finland). We were eight children (...)". We asked ourselves: why does he mention the city and the number of siblings at the very beginning? There is surely some strategy behind this in relation to identity construction.

The second drawback established by Antaki et al. (2002) is that of *under-analysis through taking sides*. What they mean by this is that researchers should attempt to put their feelings and opinions aside while analyzing and to refrain from judging the research participants. Again we felt somewhat awkward while analyzing the student's narrative as what he writes about was of concern to one of the authors. The student had left the Lestadians, a conservative Lutheran revival movement, with members mostly in the Nordic countries and the USA. One of us had had the same experience. This meant that both the student and the researcher shared some *intertext*, similar voices that the two other researchers did not. During our discussions, we had to refrain from judging or taking sides with him. For Antaki et al. (2002: np), there is a real danger here: "under-analysis by taking sides can produce a flattening of the discursive complexity, as the analyst selects quotations for the rhetorical effect of appealing to the readers as co-sympathisers or co-scolders".

The third problem noted in Antaki et al. (2002) is called *under-analysis through over-quotation or isolated quotation*, which we feel is related to the fourth problem, *the circular discovery of discourses and mental constructs*. The third problem is easy to understand: especially when dealing with traumatic narratives as the one under scrutiny, researchers may have the tendency to “snip(ping) out a single quote and allow(ing) it to ‘stand for itself’ as if required no further comment” (2002: np). When we negotiated the analysis of the student’s narrative, we took every single sentence he had written and tried to analyse them. Sometimes we felt we were being consistent by pinpointing e.g. the use of certain pronouns, (in-)direct voices such as *they said that...* Yet at times we simply let some quotes “stand for themselves” and lost the complex analysis that we were doing. This was the case for instance when we discussed the following excerpt: “Adapting to another culture opened my eyes, because I wasn’t chained to religion any more. I understood that people are similar. People just live their lives. They love each other and argue with each other. Cultures are different, but people the same”. We first saw in this quote signs of the development of intercultural competence. Yet with such a contested and polysemic notion (Dervin, 2012; Piller, 2011) – e.g. what does culture mean here? What is meant by “cultures are different but people the same”? – it is impossible to use this quote as mere “evidence” for it; it needs to be problematized in relation to the entire narrative and complemented by long-term discussions with the student teacher to make some sense of it.

As to the fourth problem noted by Antaki et al. (2002), it is related to the third one in the sense that sometimes we chose one or two linguistic signs (psychological phrases such as *I feel*) and interpreted them as revealing the student’s “truth”. For example when the student writes “today I think that every culture is precious”, there is no way we can use this as a “proof” of his transformation, especially as the course aimed at raising multicultural awareness – and thus potentially influenced what he was ‘doing’ in the narrative (Dialogism). Also we need to bear in mind that, as a narrative that was written for a lecturer, the fact that the latter will grade the student

at the end of the course, might influence what he was writing. Antaki et al. (ibid.) assert that there is again a danger of simplifying and interpreting these signs as “giving direct access to the person’s inner thoughts or feelings” and losing in the meantime the constructivist and ‘doing’ aspects of Otherness. In a sense this fourth point is also related to Antaki et al.’s 6<sup>th</sup> point which they name *Under-analysis through spotting*: for discourse analysts, a word, a pronoun or a linguistic feature do not suffice to constitute analysis. Only if these elements are recurrent or significant can they be used. For example in the narrative the student uses two passive voices in the following sentence: “at home we were taught how to behave and belong while other children were taught other things”. We felt that the passive voice played a central role in describing the student’s Otherness by comparing his experience and that of the other children, however it is impossible to find enough evidence to support that claim. One can only hypothesize.

The fifth potential problem in doing discourse analysis, *under-analysis through false survey*, points at the impossibility of “extrapolating from one’s data to the world at large” (Antaki et al., 2002: np). When working on Otherness in the participant’s narrative, we felt that, as Otherness is a construction between the writer, the actors he calls in his narrative, himself and us the researchers, it is impossible to compare this case of ‘doing’ Otherness to an other to do justice to the complexity of these constructions.

To summarize this approach to what can(not) be done to analyse Otherness in student teachers’ discourse of Otherness, we retain the idea that any piece of discourse contains identifiable and unidentifiable voices which contribute to creating Otherness. It is important for the researcher to admit to not being able to identify and examine multivoicedness fully and to speculate on the impact of this on the way s/he analyses data.

#### **4. What can be done? A template for analyzing Otherness in teacher education**

This last section represents a synthesis of the above discussions and an attempt to answer the question *what can(not) be done?* when analysing otherness in teacher education.

One important point that emerged out of our review of the three approaches is that, in practice, to “compose and decompose” their identities (Bauman, 2004: 38) people need various others and groups or communities. This is how they stratify their social experiences. This understanding of identity is also related to the recognition that people cross various collective and individual positionings and voices on a daily basis, which can be opposed, see contradictory (Hermans, 2001; Gaulejac, 2009). As such, the individual is torn apart between various networks, multiple interdependences... For the anthropologist K.P. Ewing (1990), this is not just something that is happening in the “Western” world or in affluent countries. She writes (ibid.: 251): “I argue that in all cultures people can be observed to project multiple, inconsistent self-representations that are context-dependent and may shift rapidly. At any particular moment a person usually experiences his or her articulated self as a symbolic, timeless whole, but this self may quickly be displaced by another, quite different “self,” which is based on a different definition of the situation. The person will often be unaware of these shifts and inconsistencies and may experience wholeness and continuity despite their presence”. This is essential for us as we don’t believe e.g. in hierarchies between the ‘East’ and the ‘West’ and an overemphasis on differences between these two ‘imagined’ spaces.

Researchers and practitioners – who are themselves also subjective individuals – do take part in these phenomena. Therefore it is important to reflect on our own positioning as interlocutors or readers (case of the narrative under scrutiny as one of us was the student’s teacher) when analysing data. When we were writing this article there were several occasions when one of us would say in turn *I disagree with your interpretation* and then we would have to negotiate our relation to the narrative. This is why identity cannot be reduced to a single element, in other words, there is no

such thing as a singular identity or even identity as such, but a game of co-construction which we need to recognize as researchers and discuss in our work. This is also why we need, as researchers, “to free oneself from the absurd idea that actors are full and complete participants in their own world without examining their confusion, their questioning, their relative distance from what they live. (we) should not drown the will of others in that naive belief that confuses form and substance, metaphor and concept, what signifies and what is signified” (Bensa, 2010: 36-37).

If identity and thus otherness is unstable, flexible, invented, co-constructed, etc. it seems important to work not on rules, structures or explanations but on exceptions, instabilities and misappropriations. Work on identity and otherness should thus reflect the fact that people represent themselves, not as truths but as constructs. People are always in the midst of identity “inconsistencies” and “shifts”. Thus instead of asking the question “What is somebody’s identity?” in front of our data, we should be more interested in “How do they construct what they present as their identity?” or “how do they identify themselves?”. In other words, instead of collecting the “identity/ies” (and the otherness/es), we should look at the identity markers that are used to indicate shifts and inconsistencies in identification, and this is very important, in cooperation with others (there is no identity without others!).

One of the major challenges for research on identity and otherness is the fact that we need to work on discourse. As a concept, it responds to various situations of intersubjective communication, where language is put into action without ever being a ‘finite state’ of knowledge or opinion. As such, discourse is, by nature, unstable, dynamic and reflexive and represents a space of construction for actions or social practices (Chilton, 2005: 22). For those working on identity and otherness, this means staying alert and questioning the instabilities of presented discourses and actions, but also moving away from individualistic methods (Gillespie & Cornish, 2009: 3). Methods from

linguistics are certainly useful for enriching research on interculturality and orienting it in this direction as we have seen in our section on a sociocultural approach and dialogism.

Last but not least, one of the essential aspects of Otherness and identity consists in accepting that not everything can be explained or demonstrated and that research brings up more questions and hypotheses than it delivers concrete and definitive answers—not out of laziness of course but out of respect for the individuals, the student teachers and the situations that we witness. Researchers should accept this premise, which would allow them to escape shaky analyses where research subjects are presented as “robots” lacking (inter-)subjectivity. The sociologist M. Maffesoli has formulated this in a very nice way: “it is not simply the social aspect dominated by rationalism, expressed through politics and economics, but another way of being together, where the imaginary, the dreamlike, the playful occupy an essential space” (Maffesoli, 2009: 23). Dialogism and the idea of multivoicedness show that when working on voices used to construct Otherness in the student’s narrative, many of these voices cannot be identified. The researcher can always hypothesize about the origins of the voices and their use but s/he must reflect on this process.

### **Conclusion: Why is it important to work on Otherness in teacher education?**

In our times of repeated economic crises, various forms of negative essentialism are re-emerging worldwide (Maffesoli, 2011): Othernesses are being othered and hierarchies between people, cultures and religions established. We therefore feel that it is important to examine how student teachers, who will play key roles in tomorrow’s societies, conceptualize, construct and perceive Otherness – the other’s and their own. Action research, allowing these mechanisms to emerge in a renewed and more open way, is thus essential in multicultural teacher education.

An awareness of how the use and abuse of identity and otherness in education and society at large should be at the centre of teacher education, especially to combat the current differentialist (people from different places are only always different) and culturalist (culture only explains how people behave or what they think) understanding of the world (Breidenbach and Nyiri, 2010). This entails moving from a limited understanding of *diversity* (in other words, the migrant other) to the opening of *diverse diversities* (everyone is diverse, same and different from others; see Dervin, 2011, 2012).

In methodological terms, this means that we need to test new ways of working on diversities and Otherness in teacher education again and again. As asserted in the previous section, the acceptance of failure in researching such complex and intersubjective aspects is also of importance in our work as researchers and teacher trainers. For Grossen (2010: 18), a fundamental tension in researching human activity is “that of accounting both for the stability of certain phenomena and for their ongoing change”. This means for the researcher that s/he needs to be reflexive, self-critical and paying attention to what s/he is co-constructing with her/his students and research participants.

### Appendix 1 – Student’s narrative in Finnish and English

<p>Minä synnyin Oulussa lestadiolaisperheeseen. Meitä on kahdeksan lasta ja minä perheen jaetulla keskipaikalla heti ainoan veljeni jälkeen. Koulussa ja pihaleikeissä olin outo lintu. Kotona opetettiin miten kuuluu toimia ja muille lapsille opetettiin eri asioita. Olin suomalainen, mutta katsoin kulttuuria sivusta täysin siihen osallistumatta. Siinä oli pienen pojan pääkoppa kovalla koetuksella. Välillä nostin itseni muiden yläpuolelle ja välillä taas ajattelin olevani paljon</p>	<p>I was born in Oulu in a Lestadian family. There were eight children in my family and I was in the middle right after my brother. At school and in the playground I was “the odd bird”. At home we were taught how to behave and other children were taught different things. I was a Finn but looked at the (traditional) culture from side-line and did not participate in it. It was very hard for a small boy. Sometimes I placed myself above everybody and sometimes I felt lesser than others.</p>
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<p>muuta huonompi. (ÅMK, 1)</p>	<p>ÅMK, 1)</p>
<p>Ollessani kymmenvuotias isäni ja äitini erosivat, mitä ei lestadiolaispiireissä hyvällä katsottu. Perheestämme tuli eräänlainen varoittava esimerkki, jota katsottiin kieroon. En tiennyt mihin kuulua, kun isäni ei ollut uskonnollinen ja äiti taas oli. Vartuin uskonnon parissa. Luin ahkerasti kirjoja ja kuvittelin mielessäni kaukomaita, joissa seikkailut odottivat ja elämä oli vapaata. (ÅMK, 2)</p>	<p>When I was ten my father and mother divorced, which was considered very bad in the Lestadian community. Our family became as a warning example that was looked down upon. I did not know where I belonged: my father was not religious and my mother was. I grew up with believers. I read a lot of books and was dreaming about far away countries where living was free and adventures waiting (for me). (ÅMK, 2)</p>
<p>Heti pienestä asti tunsin palavaa halua matkustella ja tutkia maita ja mantuja. Reissailin aluksi ympäri Suomea yksin ja kavereiden kanssa. 17-vuotiaana tein ensimmäisen interrail-matkani. Eurooppa tuntui tarunomaiselta ja halusin asettua paikoilleen ja olla vain yksi noista ihmisistä. Lopulta lukion jälkeen pystyin toteuttamaan toiveeni ja muutin kaverini kanssa Espanjaan opiskelemaan kieltä ja elämään. (ÅMK, 3)</p>	<p>From very early on I had an urgent need to travel and study different countries. First I travelled alone around Finland and then with my buddies. At seventeen I experienced my first inter-rail-trip. Europe felt like a dreamland and I wanted to settle down and be one of them. Finally after graduating from school I was able to realize my dream and move to Spain to study its language and culture. (ÅMK, 3)</p>
<p>Toiseen kulttuuriin perehtyminen avasi silmäni, koska en ollut enää uskonnon kahlitsema. Näin ihmisten samanlaisuuden. Joka puolella ihmiset elävät arkeansa. Rakastaen toisiaan ja toisinaan riidellen. Kulttuurit ovat erilaisia, mutta ihmiset samanlaisia. (ÅMK, 4)</p>	<p>Familiarizing myself with other cultures was an eye-opener for me. No more was I restrained by religion. I understood that people are similar everywhere and live their everyday life. Sometimes loving each other and sometimes quarrelling. Cultures are different but people are similar. (ÅMK, 4)</p>
<p>Viimein pääsin uskonnon siteistä ja ymmärsin sen vain yleismaailmallisena ilmiönä. Se oli tärkein muutos tähän mennessä elämässäni. Palasin Suomeen paljon paremmalla mielellä. Seisoin uskonnon hylkäämispäätökseni takana. En</p>	<p>Finally, I was freed from religion and I understood it as a universal phenomenon. It was the greatest change I made so far. I returned to Finland in good spirits. I stand by my decision of rejecting religion. I did not</p>

enää pakoillut mitään, vaan asetuin aloilleni. (ÅMK, 5)	run away from anything but settled down. (ÅMK, 5)
Nykyään ajattelen, että kaikki kulttuurit ovat arvokkaita. Kaikki katsovat maailmaa oman kulttuurinsa värjäämän linssin läpi. Pohjimmiltaan ihminen on kuitenkin samanlainen joka puolella. Uskon ihmisten ja kulttuurien väliseen ymmärrykseen ja yhteistyöhön. Näitä samoja arvoja ja ajatuksia haluaisin herättää tulevassa sukupolvessakin. (ÅMK, 6)	Nowadays I think that all cultures are equally valuable. Everybody looks at the world through glasses coloured by their cultures. Basically people are the same everywhere. I believe in the harmony and co-operation of people and cultures. I would like to teach these very things to my future students. (ÅMK, 6)
Suomalaisena koen pystyväni auttamaan ulkomaalaistaustaisia kansalaisia sopeutumaan suomalaiseen kulttuuriin. Samaistun maahanmuuttajiin, koska itsekin joskus koin olevani ulkopuolinen. Haluaisin toimia kehitysyhteistyössä aktiivisesti ja monikulttuurisesta koulutuksesta olisi siihen hyötyä. (ÅMK, 7)	As a Finn I should be able to help people with foreign background to integrate into Finnish culture, because sometimes I feel that I am outsider as well. I would like to be actively involved in development cooperation work and my multicultural education would help me in that. (ÅMK, 7)

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